

SC-SIC Reorganizes to Meet Your Needs

By Cassie Barber

In order to effectively meet the ever-changing needs of the more than 1,100 School Improvement Councils across the state and adjust to reduced state funding, SC-SIC has carefully reorganized and prioritized its services for the coming year. (See Message from the Director, page 2.)



SC-SIC staff members Dr. Jean Norman, Weldon Horne, and Cassie Barber worked throughout the summer to evaluate and reorganize services.

SC-SIC will no longer offer SIC trainings at the school and district levels. Instead, a new videotape of "The Basics" training for SICs will be available to all districts in late September and will also be available for downloading from the thirty-five DELCs (Distance Education Learning Centers) across the state. The videotape is a companion to the School Improvement Council Handbook module, "The Basics," which is available for download on the SC-SIC website www.ed.sc.edu/sic in English and Spanish. Limited numbers of the printed English version are available through your SIC District Contact and from the SC-SIC office in Columbia.

Three regional mini-conferences this fall will provide additional training focused on the basic components of an effective SIC. (See pages 3 and 4 for conference details and a registration form.) Three more regional conferences focusing on programs, projects, and resources for SICs will be held in the spring. The final mini-conference held in Columbia will function as the 18th Annual SIC Conference and will feature the presentation of the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award.

Though smaller in scope than the usual annual event, these mini-conferences will provide SIC members with six opportunities to attend a conference in a variety of locations around the state. Dates and locations for the spring events have not been confirmed.

Parent and community involvement is key to student achievement, therefore it follows that having a strong SIC is key to a good school report card. In place of regional coordinators, SC-SIC has hired two part-time Council Specialists, Diane Jumper and Jennifer Robinson, to provide customized assistance to those schools around the state that have received an "unsatisfactory" grade on their school report card. Jennifer is the former SC-SIC Lowcountry Regional Coordinator and some of you may know Diane from her work at the SC School Administrators Association where she headed the Schools of Promise program.

Topical training throughout the school year will be provided through eight Council Updates (formerly known as the State Meetings) via SC ETV satellite. These half hour programs can be taped by the district or your school media specialist and shown during SIC meetings; or lend the tapes to SIC members to view at home. Updates will include such topics as No Child Left Behind, education advocacy, and the relationship of child health to academic achievement. (See page 6 for dates, times and channels.)

You may remember that last year SC-SIC attempted to send this newsletter via email as a cost-cutting measure. Unfortunately, several hundred of the email addresses were returned and we were unable to correct the addresses, so a number of SIC members failed to receive that newsletter. Until the email database can be perfected, the newsletter will be distributed via US mail. Because of the increased printing and mailing costs, the newsletter will be published four times this school year

instead of the usual five issues.

One of the best resources available to SIC members is the SC-SIC website (www.ed.sc.edu/sic). It features all the latest SIC news and resources you need. If you haven't visited in a while, please take a minute to see what SC-SIC has to offer you. From handbooks, to sample bylaws and the Report to the Parents, events and newsletter archives, it's all there for you. SC-SIC Operations Manager, Weldon Horne, has honed his skills and built a user-friendly website that is always improving.



Operations Manager Weldon Horne carefully "builds" the SC-SIC website!

The SC-SIC toll free hotline is always available for your questions. You can leave a message for anyone on the staff at any time and we will respond promptly with the information you need. The SC-SIC staff has worked hard this summer to be ready to provide you with the information and resources you need to do the important work of SICs. We welcome your feedback on the changes we have made and your suggestions on how we can serve you better in the future.

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Message from . . . the Executive Director

This school year challenges all of us. Education budgets have experienced cuts and reductions. SC-SIC is no exception. For most of us this spells **Crisis**. The Chinese symbol for crisis is made up of two other symbols: **Danger** and **Opportunity**. Ancient wisdom tells us that when a crisis places us in danger, we must use all the creativity and resources available to us to seek new opportunities to cope with and overcome the crisis. What is achieved depends on the response to the crisis.

The Chinese Symbol for Crisis



For example, the SC-SIC staff might be in *danger* of throwing up our hands and giving up; or trying to continue to do the same thing and complain that it's just not enough; or ignoring the information and evidence that goals need to be met and blame the General Assembly and funding. These responses would keep us in the same place and keep us in the crisis.

To address the crisis and limit the effects of the danger, the SC-SIC staff has had to get a different perspective. We have reframed our situation, asking some hard questions about how to achieve the mission of delivering training and services to the state's 1130 councils while directing time and resources to the councils of schools designated as "unsatisfactory."

This crisis has provided us with the *opportunity* to try new approaches, to seek out collaborative relationships with SC ETV and the SDE, to support district and school administrators with new methods to inform and prepare their school improvement council members, and to make effective use of personnel to train, communicate, facilitate, and mentor.

SC-SIC has chosen opportunity. We invite you to take advantage of the new and creative ways to receive training via videotape, regional conferences, and a wide variety of materials and information on the SC-SIC website.

Accepting the challenge of reduced funding and personnel as we continue to fulfill our goals has been trying and tiring. It took courage, persistence, and hard work. It also took support from the SC-SIC Board and the USC College of Education.

The SC-SIC staff – Cassie Barber, Weldon Horne, Barbara Purvis, Diane Jumper, and Jennifer Robinson – invites SIC members to consider the opportunities and continue their work to improve the education for the children of South Carolina.

Jean M. Norman

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veteran status.

Get Ready, Get Set, Go!

SIC Fall Regional Mini-Conferences

Locations and Dates

October 18 – Greenville

Keynote Speaker: George C. Bell, Arthur J. Gallagher & Company
Family Friendly Workplace Award Winner

Crowne Plaza Hotel - Room Rate \$69

I-385 - Roper Mountain Exit
Call 803-736-3000 for reservations and directions

October 25 – North Charleston

Keynote Speaker: Theron Snype, Mayor's Office for Children and Youth, Charleston
"Helping Parents Make a Difference in Education"

Sheraton Hotel - Room Rate \$99

MUST mention SIC for discount rate
I-26 – Montague Avenue Exit
Call 843-747-1900 or 800-747-1900 for reservations and directions

November 1 – Columbia

Keynote Speaker: Ellen Still, Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent of Education
"No Child Left Behind Reality Check"

Holiday Inn North East - Room Rate \$69

I-20 – Two Notch Road Exit
Call 864-297-6300 for reservations and directions

Mini-Conference Agenda

8:30 a.m.	Registration and Coffee
9:00 a.m.	General Session
9:30 a.m.	Concurrent Workshops
10:45 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	Concurrent Workshops
12:15 p.m.	Lunch and Keynote Address
1:30 p.m.	Adjourn

Workshop Sessions – All Locations (Choose Two.)

1. ***"Bylaws Basics: A Framework for Success"*** -- Written guidelines or bylaws provide continuity and structure from year to year. Includes elections, meeting dates, membership, committees, minutes and more. Leave with a draft set of bylaws to present at your next SIC meeting.
2. ***"How to be a Riley Award Winning SIC"*** -- Learn how to use the SIC HANDBOOK to build the foundation, then launch an SIC that really makes a difference! Winners of the 2003 Dick & Tunky Riley School Improvement Award will participate when possible. Learn how to apply for the 2004 Riley Award.
3. ***"Building Leadership and Meeting Skills"*** -- Who leads? Who follows? How will we remember? Get the leadership skills SIC members need to create agendas, keep records, set boundaries, and more, so you can accomplish your goals.
4. ***"Your School Report Card: More Than Just a Grade"*** -- The school report card provides a wealth of information about the performance of your school. What do all those indicators mean? How do they affect student achievement? How can you use them to make positive change? Find out from Dr. Jo Anne Anderson and members of the *South Carolina Education Oversight Committee* staff.

School Improvement Council
Fall Regional Mini-Conferences
Get Ready, Get Set, Go!

Registration Form

Check the Date and Location You Plan to Attend:

_____ Oct. 18 – Greenville - Crowne Plaza Hotel (**Registration & Cancellation Deadline: October 10**)

_____ Oct. 25 – North Charleston - Sheraton Hotel (**Registration & Cancellation Deadline: October 17**)

_____ Nov. 1 – Columbia – Holiday Inn NE (**Registration & Cancellation Deadline: October 24**)

Note your workshop session preference below. Please choose TWO.

_____ Building Leadership and Meeting Skills

_____ Bylaws Basics – A Framework for Success

_____ How to be a Riley Award Winning SIC

_____ Your School Report Card - More Than Just a Grade

Name _____

() Parent () Teacher () Administrator () Student () Community Member () Other _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Daytime Phone _____

Email Address _____

District _____ School _____ Other _____

Nonrefundable \$10 Registration Fee includes lunch and materials. No cash or credit cards accepted.

Please mark method of payment below:

() check or money order enclosed/will bring

() district/school to pay fee - must include purchase order # _____

I understand that I am responsible for ensuring final payment of my registration fee regardless of attendance.

Participant's Signature: _____

QUESTIONS? Call 800-868-2232 or 803-777-7658

Please **FAX** completed form to: 803-777-0023 or **MAIL** to: SC-SIC, College of Education, Wardlaw 001, USC, Columbia, SC 29208

No on-site registration!!

No FAXED or Mailed registrations accepted after deadlines listed above.

Please Note: Your registration will be confirmed by email or phone.

Please copy this form as needed and send one registration form for each person attending.

For Your Information . . .

Report to the Parents Date Change

The SC General Assembly approved a number of changes to regulations at the SC Department of Education last June, including the deadline for the Report to the Parents. In 2004 the deadline will be changed from February 1 to **April 30**. Many school officials see this as a positive change because all school and district reports of this type now have the same deadline, eliminating confusion. This will also give SICs more time to analyze and report on information learned in the school report cards, which come out in November. SC-SIC plans to offer training on how to write the Report to the Parents at the spring mini-conferences. You can view sample Reports now when you visit the SC-SIC website.

2003-04 Riley Award Application Ready

All SICs that have been convened for one year are invited to apply for the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. One SIC will be honored during the 18th Annual SIC Conference next spring for their work to improve their school and community. Four SICs will receive honorable mentions.

This year's application is very similar to last year's but there are a few important changes. Visit www.ed.sc.edu/sic and download a copy OR call SC-SIC at 800-868-2232 or 803-777-7658 and we will fax the application to you. To help your SIC get ready to apply, be sure to attend one of the SIC Fall Mini-conferences and sign up for the workshop titled "How to be a Riley Award Winning SIC." You can learn more about last year's Riley Award winners when you visit the SC-SIC website.

District Contacts Named

Every year the superintendent of each school district is asked to name one person to be the SIC District Contact. This person is the liaison between the SIC and the school district and with the state SIC office in Columbia. He or she can be a terrific resource for your school. You can find out the name of your SIC District Contact on the SC-SIC website or by calling 800-868-2232.

SC Schools – A Southern “Melting Pot”

It may surprise you to learn that more than 50 different languages are spoken by children attending South Carolina schools. An estimated 10,000 students will be designated LEP (Limited English Proficient) for the 2003-04 school year, presenting new challenges and opportunities for schools and communities. Spanish is the native language for about half of the students with limited knowledge of English. Of the top ten languages spoken, only two use the Roman alphabet. In order of prevalence they are: Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Hmong, Korean, Japanese, Gujarati, Arabic, and German. Source: South Carolina Department of Education.

SIC Action Timeline FALL

Check your status:



DONE?

- Members Elected
- Members Appointed
- Ex-officio Notified
- Officers Elected
- Provide information from SC-SIC for new members

DOING?

- Members have a copy of the school improvement plan for this year, the budget, the Report Card, and the Report to the Parents
- Organize members into subcommittees related to plan goals
- Bylaws reviewed; revised if necessary
- School newsletter article written monthly
- Register for Regional SIC Conference

GOING TO DO?

- Apply for Riley Award
- Send SIC members to Regional SIC Conference
- Invite SIC District Contact to visit, attend meeting
- Prepare parents for the distribution of the Report Card

SIC State Meetings are Now *Council Updates*

For the past several years SIC members have had the opportunity to tune in to live, hour-long State Meetings via SC ETV satellite each quarter. The SC-SIC staff examined the effectiveness of those live evening programs and decided to make a few changes.

This year SC-SIC will produce eight half-hour *Council Updates*. These programs will be pre-recorded and feature topical information to keep SICs current with issues, programs, and resources throughout the school year. Each half hour program explores a different topic and can easily be placed on the agenda of a typical SIC meeting or other event. Two programs will be broadcast together for taping during the school day and can be viewed independently at your convenience. SC-SIC plans to record eight *Council Updates* this school year. See *Mark Your Calendar* on page six for dates, times and channel.

Help for Children with Cancer

Children's Chance is a statewide nonprofit whose mission is to assist families dealing with the trauma of pediatric cancer. You may have a child in your school who could benefit from the many programs they offer including counseling, support from other parents of children with cancer, and financial assistance. Children's Chance also works to inform the community about issues surrounding childhood cancer and administers a grant program which funds activities such as art and music therapy, family weekends, and school re-entry assistance for children who have lost a sibling to cancer. To learn more about Children's Chance call 803-254-5996 or visit www.childrenschance.org.

Mark Your Calendar!

September

- 21 Broadcast: In Our Schools**, 7:00 p.m.
Featuring Richland Northeast High SIC,
2003 Riley Award Winner. Available on local
PBS TV channels.
- 23 SIC District Contacts Meet** - Columbia
– “The Basics” videotape available*
– Revised SIC Handbooks available**
- 25 & 26 Rebroadcast: In Our Schools**, 10:30 a.m.
Via SC ETV satellite channel 318.

October

- 15 Council Updates**, 10:00 a.m.
Topics: “School Report Card” and “Riley Award”
Via SC ETV satellite channel 309
Rebroadcast 2:00 p.m.
- 18 SIC Mini-conference** – Greenville
- 20 Speaking of Schools**, 6:00 p.m.
Featuring SC-SIC. Available on local
NPR stations.
- 25 SIC Mini-conference** – Charleston

November

- 1 SIC Mini-conference** - Columbia
- 14 Riley Award** – Applications Due

December

- 3 Council Updates**, 10:00 a.m.
Topics: “NCLB & Adequate Yearly Progress”
and “Education Advocacy”
Via SC ETV satellite channel 309
Rebroadcast 2:00 p.m.



*Check with your SIC District Contact or your local DELC
<http://www.scetv.org/nts/documents/delcs.html> for your copy.
**Visit www.ed.sc.edu/sic to download a copy or check with
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